

Usability Testing Reflection

EDLD 5318 – Usability Testing & Learning Community Contribution

(Optional for readers who want a deeper look at the research-based analysis behind the usability testing.)

Introduction

The usability testing process for my course *Together We Grow: Family Math Connections in Kindergarten* provided essential insights into how real users interact with my instructional design. Although the course was aligned with COVA and CSLE principles, testing revealed navigation patterns, misunderstandings, and access challenges that I could not have predicted on my own. As Krug (2009) notes, usability issues surface only when real users attempt to complete real tasks.

Participants and Their Relevance

For this round of testing, I worked with three stakeholders:

1. A bilingual Kindergarten teacher.
2. A parent representing the family audience.
3. A colleague from the ADL program.

Each participant offered a perspective directly related to the intended users. While I hoped to include a curriculum leader, these three individuals provided meaningful and appropriate feedback. Their insights balanced classroom experience, family usability, and instructional design considerations.

Platform Impact on Navigation and Access

The prototype was created in Google Classroom, a familiar platform for my school community. However, usability testing revealed several issues:

- Participants who were not pre-enrolled struggled with the initial login process.
- The “Classwork” section required too many steps to access Module 1.
- Multimedia elements sometimes loaded slowly on mobile devices.

These observations highlighted the importance of designing simple entry points and ensuring mobile-friendly content, since many families rely primarily on smartphones.

Key Lessons Learned

Several lessons emerged clearly from participant feedback:

- **Visuals are more effective than long text.** Users responded better to icons, short instructions, and simple layouts.
- **Navigation must follow a predictable path.** When participants had to search for the next step, their confidence decreased.
- **Demonstration videos support understanding**, especially for tasks involving QR codes or digital manipulatives.

These findings reinforced Krug’s (2009) reminder that users navigate based on what makes sense to them, not according to the designer’s expectations.

Revisions Made After Testing

Based on the feedback, I implemented several improvements:

- Added a shorter and clearer welcome video.
- Created a simplified navigation map: *Start Here* → *Module 1* → *Activity*.
- Introduced consistent icons to label videos, tasks, and practice activities.
- Reduced text-heavy sections and clarified instructions.

These adjustments improved clarity, organization, and user confidence.

Impact on Alignment of Outcomes, Activities, and Assessment

Usability testing also strengthened alignment across instructional components. I revised the Quick Practice activity to make expectations explicit and redesigned the rubric to emphasize observable behaviors. These updates helped ensure that assessments truly reflected the intended learning outcomes.

Addressing Support and Infrastructure Needs

Testing helped me anticipate and address common technical challenges. I created:

- A mobile-access guide for families.
- A brief tutorial on how to use QR codes.
- A troubleshooting section for common issues.

These additions increase accessibility for families with varying levels of digital experience.

Conclusion

Usability testing significantly improved the clarity, flow, and accessibility of my course. The process reinforced the value of user-centered design and constant refinement. This experience enhanced my understanding of effective instructional design and strengthened my ability to create meaningful learning environments for Kindergarten families.

References

Krug, S. (2009). *Usability Test Demo* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/1UCDUOB_aS8